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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/760,147	01/12/2001	Daniel A. Babbs	ASYS8102US0MEM	2364

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EXAMINER

KEENAN, JAMES W

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3652

DATE MAILED: 08/04/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/760,147

Applicant(s)

BABBS ET AL.

Examiner

James Keenan

Art Unit

3652

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 May 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 12-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 3652

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 5/22/03 has been entered.

2. Claims 12-14 remain withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in Paper No. 10.

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, line 7, the recitation that there are plural "workpieces located within the container" lacks clear antecedent basis;

and line 9, "the ambient environment" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 5, line 2, —include—should apparently be inserted after "may".

In claim 7, the recitation of "reticles" is unclear.

Art Unit: 3652

In claim 8, last two lines, it is not clear what is meant by "between said slots and between said slots and the SMIF pod".

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1 and 3-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Matsumoto (US 6,517,304).

Matsumoto shows an apparatus for handling flat workpieces, including load port 31 supporting container 2 having door 22 coupled to shell 21, the port capable of separating the door from the shell and providing access to plural workpieces in the container (figures 7A-7B), the apparatus further including stocker 53 (figure 10) isolated from ambient conditions and adapted to store each workpiece after removal from the container, and transfer mechanism 4 for transferring each workpiece between the container and the stocker.

Art Unit: 3652

7. Claims 1 and 3-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hasper et al (WO 99/65064).

Hasper et al show an apparatus for handling flat workpieces, including load port 40 supporting a cassette container having door 42 coupled to shell 10, the port capable of separating the door from the shell and providing access to plural workpieces in the container, the apparatus further including stocker 12 isolated from ambient conditions and adapted to store each workpiece after removal from the container, and transfer mechanism 24 for transferring each workpiece between the container and the stocker.

Re claims 6-7, since the stocker can be moved from chamber 22 to chamber 21, it is considered that it may be "stored remotely" and "used for bulk transport".

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto or Hasper et al in view of Wooding et al (US 4,886,412, previously cited).

The primary references show the workpieces stored in a horizontal rather than vertical orientation.

Art Unit: 3652

Wooding et al show an apparatus whereby the same type of flat workpieces are individually removed from cassettes and placed in a vertical orientation on a table (analogous to a stocker) prior to being moved to a processing chamber.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Matsumoto or Hasper et al by placing the workpieces in a vertical orientation in the stocker, as suggested by Wooding et al, as this would simply be an art recognized design expediency if the particular process to be performed on the workpieces was one in which such an orientation would be advantageous.

10. Claim 8 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

11. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-8 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

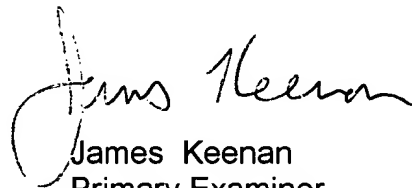
12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James Keenan whose telephone number is 703-308-2559.

Art Unit: 3652

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eileen Lillis can be reached on 703-308-3248. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-872-9327 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.



James Keenan
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3652

jwk
July 30, 2003